

Harwood budget vote community survey (Responses).xlsx

		How did you vote on Article 1 asking to approve a 2024-25 budget of \$50,844,703?	Use this spot to comment on why you voted as you did on the budget question.	Another vote will need to be held to ultimately have a budget approved for the 2024-25 school year. What will it take to win your "yes" vote?
Hometown	Your role(s) as a voter			
			As a current Vermont educator, I voted no on the school budget because I believe the district needs to reign in spending and conduct a thorough audit to identify areas of waste. Vermont outspends nearly all other states and has the highest staff: student ratio, suggesting a lack of efficiency in resource allocation - not a lack of resource. Despite our state's abundance of resources, we must strive to do more with less and prioritize effective use of taxpayer funds. It is crucial for us to address these disparities and ensure that our resources are being used in the most efficient and impactful way for the benefit of our students.	To win my yes vote on the school budget, property taxes must not increase by more than \$500 for an average house. As a current educator, I have witnessed the financial challenges facing our district, and I believe that serious restructuring of the district's staffing to increase efficiency may be necessary for future stability. For instance, having 9 principals for 8 schools is absurd, especially considering that these schools only serve about 2,000 students in total. This disparity highlights potential inefficiencies that need to be addressed. While it may be a tough decision, I see this crisis as an opportunity for the district to reassess its financial practices and prioritize efficiency. In addition to the tax limit, I would also need to see increased community outreach, proactive efforts to reduce spending, and a comprehensive plan for long-term financial sustainability in order to support the budget.
Duxbury	Parent of current student	No		
Duxbury	Community member	No		
Duxbury	Harwood student	Yes		
Duxbury	Community member	Yes		
Duxbury	Parent of current student	Yes		More specific topics.
Duxbury	Community member	Yes		
Duxbury	Community member	Yes	I thought it was necessary	Meaningful proposals
Duxbury	Community member	Yes		
Duxbury	Parent of current student	Yes		
Duxbury	Parent of current student	Yes		
Duxbury	Community member	Yes		
Duxbury	Parent of current student	Yes		
Duxbury	Community member	Yes		
Duxbury	Community member	Yes		
Duxbury	Community member	Yes	We as a community need to hold the line on egregious spending habits that impact our taxes. To approve a 20-30% increase in taxes with no plan to reduce spending perpetuates a broken system and just keeps poor planning and bad fiscal management in place.	A plan that focuses on reduced spending and is paired with a plan on how we will prevent further increases in taxes. Don't ask voters to keep a broken system in place and throw more money at it without a plan to better.
Duxbury	Parent of current student	Yes	Our schools are in need of major improvements and our schools/education are a vital part of keeping our community thriving.	I'm already planning to vote Yes
Duxbury	Community member	Yes	Can help as well as cooperate to	The way we think, the way we act, the way we communicate is from the outside in. Obviously, the way we're going to do this is to start with clarity,
			Some follow-up actions State of VT needs to find other significant ways to finance education beyond just property taxes; there are too many administration and central office staff with big salaries and benefits, and growing; the school district should look at redistricting how we use our schools..such as using one building a large PreK center, another one as a 1st and 2nd (or also 3rd grade) school. A 3rd/4th or 4th/5th grade school and send 6th, 7th graders to CBMS. All 8th graders to Harwood and house central office staff at Harwood also. Not using one or two buildings would cut lots of money and allow each building to focus on best practices for each developmental levels of students. Traveling 20 -25 miles to get to a school is not out of line with what so many students already do in many other places.	
Duxbury	Employee of the HUUSD	No		No more than a 5% property tax increase
			Some of the increased costs/taxes are out of the Board's control, but some are not. We have far too many staff and administrator positions, and frankly schools are being asked to do jobs they were not designed to do. We also should have combined some of these schools a long time ago--while it's nice to have low student-teacher ratios, we simply do not have the tax base to afford it and people are at risk of being taxed out of their homes. To be clear, I primarily blame our state legislators for these problems as they have continually passed the buck on this difficult issue. I agree with a recent editorial in the Valley Reporter that we should strive to bring our numbers down to better align with national averages, especially because Vermont is a small state and not particularly wealthy. After doing all that, if there's anything left over, the teachers should be paid more. In summary: slash administrative costs and jobs, complete essential infrastructure repairs, and support our teachers, while putting pressure on Montpelier to solve the problems that they created.	Radical cuts to non-teacher staff positions and a firm plan to consolidate schools. More intense pressure on the state to reform the way we fund education would also help.
Duxbury	Community member	No		
			I believe it's time to consolidate the school district, school buildings, number of employees, and rising cost of the education system in our area. The endless spending by the school systems is pricing Vermonters out of the state. I'm a hard working community member and it's getting hard to justify staying in the state I was born and raised in. I was once a teacher here in Vermont and the politics and endless spending by the schools made me realize the system is broken. It's time to start looking at funding the school systems by other means than increasing taxes to hard working Vermonters.	There will not be a yes from myself until the school system is consolidated, the number of employees working for the district are within a budget that doesn't consistently increase my taxes. When spending is under control and some hard choices are made by the schools themselves to help the community members stay community members. Maybe the teachers can pay more of their own health care costs like more and more Vermonters are having to.
Duxbury	Community member	No		
			Act 127 is a phase in formula. The district will need to continue to trim the budget. Greater tax implications and CLA implications, while serious, are out of the hands of the school board and community.	
Duxbury	Employee of the HUUSD	Yes		

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Duxbury	Community member	No	I don't want a 20% increase in property taxes. The more money the schools have the more they indoctrinate the students. Vermont has some of the highest school costs per student and just mediocre education results.	\$40,000,000 or less.
Duxbury	Community member	No	The price tag is not at all reasonable. I'm not paying for a Harvard priced education. I would like to retire here in Vermont in 4 years. This unaffordable budget would be damaging to my budget. I do nt think the cost spent on education is fair or reasonable.	Cut spending I don't care how. Consolidate schools, increase class size, have teachers pay more for their insurance. Reduce paraeducators. Cut everything that is resulting in a muffin top on this budget. My budget doesn't suffer from muffin top because the school budget is a parasite, sucking the life out of me. Do you hear the anger???
Duxbury	Community member	No	With the high state education tax, then district, it's too much to swallow. No one can afford tax hikes that are that significant. The proposed was too much without stating anything about how costs would be reduced in future.	A plan of how they will not come back in 4 years saying "we need more money empty your pockets again" and have a plan to actually cut costs
Duxbury	Community member	No	We live on a fixed income and cannot afford tax increases.	Reduce staff, have employees help to pay for their health insurance and get new negotiators. Yu have to realize that your increases are not sustainable for taxpayers. Lower the staff/student ratio.
Duxbury	Community member	No	Too high for a fixed income person.	Lower the asking price.
Duxbury	Parent of current student	No	I feel that we need to consider ways to reduce the budget. I feel like things such as having two separate bus route in both morning and afternoon is a waste as an example. We also should consider consolidating schools to reduce our maintenance costs.	A common sense and open minded approach to cut budget cost. We should also consider going back to one schedule for the whole school district
Duxbury	Community member	No	Saleries are up 3-5%. Cost of living is up around 5%. Household budgts cannot absorb higher than 5% increase. It is the job of the school district to find cost savings in order to present a 5% increase budget. As a business manager I understand labor costs are the biggest cost to a business. Since the teaching union has agreed increases for several years to come a labor cost saving can only come by reducing the number of staff.	A 5% increase.
Duxbury	Community member	No	Would raise taxes too much, does not take into consideration the possible impact of the state's education increase, does not take into account the \$80+ million bond issue (including such luxury items as 2 gyms - absolutely absurd) still hanging in the background. Basically - since I am on a fairly fixed income, at the rate of these increases, it is possible I will be taxed out of my home at some point.	DRASTIC cuts to the budget. Get back to basic needs and eliminate the fluff. If we have to cut positions, so be it as we have less students each year. Eliminate some of the non-student facing positions in the administrative unit of the supervisory union - perhaps combine some of the smaller schools to cut expenses.
Duxbury	Parent of current student	Yes	I did vote in favor of the budget, but honestly, the cost of keeping the status quo for schools is too high... The way we're doing education in Vermont/HUUSD is not sustainable and it hasn't been for over a decade. We're faced with having to accept some hard realities and I wish the state would just step in and be the "bad guy" , to take over and mandate a few things that would save all districts \$, such as deeper consolidations of schools that have low populations and an increase in the number of students in classes. There are loads of things that can happen, but no one wants to tell SDs what to do and no one wants to upset anyone and we want to keep jobs. I get it, but the reality is that that isn't sustainable- and unless we are willing to fund it, we need to be willing to let go of something.	I don't think it's fair to put all the pressure, responsibility and blame on the SD - The state needs to get tough and put some smart and sustainable policies in place... otherwise the community will hate and resent their local schools and schools will continue to struggle.
Duxbury	Community member	No	There are significant systemic issues at play and the continued increasing budget proposal seems to only serve as a bandaid. We are a retired couple! On a fixed income! We would not be able to afford the property taxes that were projected if the Article passed! No one should be made to sell their home because they couldn't afford the property tax! It's not that I don't value the schools. I worked for 21 years at Crossett!! But there needs to be a better way to calculate how this works!	A budget that refocuses on the quality of student learning and also improves efficiency with spending and resources.
Duxbury	Community member, Retired home owners	No	Spending is out of control. We have the highest Admin to student ratio in the country - At least half of the Administrators should be fired, including co and assistant principals. We cannot afford to pay the proposed 20-30+% tax increases. VTs cost per student is 3rd highest in the country - it should be no more than the average. Our students are failing and throwing more money at the schools each year has shown NO improvement.	To have it not affect our property taxes so much!
Fayston	Community member	No		Come up with a budget that does not raise our taxes and I will vote for it.
Fayston	Harwood student	Yes		

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			<p>I did vote yes, because our schools and children need it. And because I trust the budget team - they did not create this budget thinking "how can we suck the taxpayers dry?". They looked carefully at the needs of our schools and kids.</p> <p>Yes, the State is at fault. The cap was removed and poof the budget goes up. That doesn't mean that the problems the schools need to address were not there before. It just means that the cap was preventing many issues from being addressed previously. The staff and board of the district have been dealing with too many issues that they did not have adequate funding for. It is their job to try to fix these issues.</p> <p>I sometimes think about the (overwhelmingly) failed bond vote a couple of years ago and think to myself what a massive disappointment that was. Our schools are still going to need those same repairs. \$60 million is a lot of money, yes, but it was over a 20 year period. We are never again going to get a bond/loan with an interest rate as low as the time of the bond vote. The repairs that bond was going to address will now be more expensive. That was a horrendously missed opportunity to take care of many of our schools' ailments.</p> <p>Things all over are getting more expensive. Unfortunately for our children, that means keeping the budget flat year over year would provide students less and less as costs go up. But people don't care. I see letters to the editor in the VR along the lines of 'sure, my kids went to Harwood years ago, but enough is enough' and it breaks my heart. Those folks seemingly fail to realize that other residents without kids in the schools were paying for their kids' education in the past. Now that their kids have moved on, they themselves stop caring about a vitally core component of our community.</p> <p>We live in a society that should have an aspirational goal of educating our children as best we can and paving the road for their successful futures. Schools are important. Repairs cost money. Programs cost money. The students of Harwood deserve better.</p>	
Fayston	Parent of current student	Yes		I already voted to approve - surely the next number will come in lower so I will vote to approve that as well.
Fayston	Community member	Yes	development trends	development trends
Fayston	Community member	Yes		
Fayston	Community member	No	It is the only method available to try to get some change to the funding formula	My property taxes are too high, period, and they NEVER go down
Fayston	Harwood student	Yes	I completely agree with this proposal	I am very supportive
			With news from the state that our property taxes were going to take a significant jump(estimated 20%-30%), we just cannot justify further elevation of our property taxes. When we add up increased costs of living pretty much across the board, additional expenses outside of our household need to be limited. Our schools have been requesting and mostly receiving annual increases in their budgets for many years and we need to get this abundant spending under control!	A much more reasonable budget.
Fayston	Community member	No	It is obnoxious to expect an average resident to see a 20-30% tax increase	A budget 20% lower with the balance coming from the canabus tax revenue
Fayston	Community member	No	Too big and too large tax increase	A budget that doesn't raise taxes more than 2%
Fayston	Community member	Yes	The schools should not be punished for a broken property tax system	
Fayston	Community member	No	Because the legislature has not finished their work.	A true explanation of expenses, and why maintenance has been deferred though there was money in reserve.
			I voted to approve the budget because funding for our children's education needs to be a priority. I understand that the budget already includes cuts to staff based on attrition, and the increases are due to factors outside the school district's control. The tax increases that everyone is concerned about are not due to our school district spending being out of control, they are due to convoluted state education funding formulas and property assessments skyrocketing in the last four years because there aren't enough houses for everyone who wants to live in our beautiful state.	Keep funding the important educational services that our children need to succeed.
			At this point I will not vote to approve ANY school budget that rises more than the annual cost of living. We are driving native Vermonters and working Vermonters out of this state in drove. Our spendthrift legislature needs to understand the impact their decisions (the decisions that result in 20-35% increases in property taxes in ONE year!) have on everyday Vermonters. This is NOT a repudiation of the LOCAL school board. It is intended as a very loud statement that Vermonters will no longer tolerate spendthrift school spending in Montpelier.	Our property tax bills can not increase any more than the annual cost of living. To pass a budget that increases more than the COLA increases working Vermonters get in their paychecks is unconscionable. Our legislature needs to get back to representing ALL Vermonters not just those rich enough to be insulated from the effect of these ludicrous increases.
Fayston	Taxpayer (Community Member) I pay taxes and am furious	No		
Fayston	Parent of current student	Yes	The thought of reducing education staff after the pandemic set all students back seems absurd. It is a lot of money, but I would cut back in my personal budgets in other places to make sure the schools continue to provide high quality education and maintain a safe environment.	I'm afraid of all the positions that are going to be cut and the impact on the students.
Fayston	Parent of current student		I would have voted yes	I will vote yes
Fayston	Community member			More information on what the outcome will be of the rewrite of a portion of Vermont's school funding formula

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Fayston	Community member	No	Because we hear our taxes could go up 40% due to this excessive budget.	A LOT. Level funding. School spending is excessive. Realize that when many of us were young we had over 30 people in a classroom and learned fine. There was only one troublemaker per class. Parents do not sufficiently discipline their kids. Kids need all kinds of extra "care" than they used to get. Administrative overhead needs to be cut drastically and whatever additional government salaries we are paying to administer a state-wide system. No million dollar salaries. I'm just learning also that long-time teachers make SO much more money than newer younger teachers. Many of us pay our own health care plus the health care of others which is driving up the costs. I heard Burlington gets a lot of the money and has access to Mandarin Chinese classes when this whole problem started with a family in the boondocks wanting a better education.
Fayston	Community member	Yes		A single digit rate increase and a push to have the state start from scratch on education funding.
Fayston	Community member	Yes	Funding education is critical to an informed citizenry, preserving what remains of our democracy and shaping a culture of respect, community engagement, a value for the arts, curiosity, empathy, intellectual pursuits, etc. If ever there was a compelling time to ensure that our schools are well funded, now's the time.	
Fayston	Parent of current student	No	I planned to vote no in protest against VT's school funding through property taxes, and in protest against the predicted large tax increase.	I am not sure - as I agree that HUUSD needs the budget funds as specified and I support our teachers and staff. I would like to see legislative action to fix how schools are funded.
Fayston	Community member	Yes		I will vote "Yes" as long as teaching positions are not cut.
Fayston	Community member	Yes	The school is for the kids. The kids are our most important community members. They are the future. We have to do right for them.	Whatever the board is willing to ask for that they think will pass.
Fayston	Community member	No	Can't afford any more taxes, and I don't have kids.	Find the budget somewhere else, I can barely afford living here as it is.
Fayston	Community member	No	We simply cannot afford the increase in property taxes. If they go much higher we will need to move.	Little to no tax increase
Fayston	Community member	No	The projected tax increase is simply too great.	I'd like to see a budget with VISION. I know buildings need work, but are we building what we need for the future? I would like to see a budget that explains how the planned building improvements work for the future. Teacher salaries and health insurance costs are what they are and I support them. I would like to hear how you have innovated within your budget to cut costs. What creative ideas have you come up with? I want to see a lean, bottom-line budget.
Fayston	Parent of current student	No	It's too much to ask of taxpayers right now	
Fayston	Parent of current student	Yes	Education costs need to be addressed at a local and state level. Forcing drastic cuts by rejecting the budget does not seem right.	Thoughtful consideration on how to collaborate with the state legislature to address long-term budgetary questions and needed building updates.
Fayston	Community member/Tax payer			Reasonable budget request
Fayston	Community member	Yes		The budget for the school year is reasonable
Fayston	Community member	No	Time on the board let me know about the sometimes fat budgets. The board making cuts doesn't lower our tax rate. If we don't get a HARD message to the state they will not address the education funding that is so badly broken.	The legislature taking on reform.
Fayston	Community member	No	School funding is broke. People can't afford to dump money into a hole. I feel as a tax payer, one should only be required to pay school taxes until a certain age, say 65. I feel that parents shouldn't get a tax break for every child, that money should go to the school systems to help pay the way for their children. I feel there is too much "entitlement" and people need to be held accountable. I don't have an answer on how to fix the problem because it is so wide spread across alot of sectors. Maybe it needs to be address at a more basic level, just because you want something doesn't mean you'll get it given to you.	Not sure. Since the "gold town" decision, it has been a very messed up way of funding schools and the problem is very deep
Fayston	Community member	Yes	It's a difficult circumstance and frustrating to see costs rising so much. Am disappointed with the state education funding model and how it works. For Article 1, I saw the need for HUUSD and never like to kick the tax can down the road because those numbers would just get larger. We need to invest and support our community schools TODAY. Nonetheless, I would also like to see some practical changes at the local level to improve efficiencies and help reign in costs. It can be done!	
Fayston	Community member	No	Primarily because I have no idea what the budget is going to cost me, other than it will cost me a lot more. Secondly, the current funding process is untenable. The population is aging, including this senior citizen. The present process extracts more money from "Gold towns" such as those in the MRV. There is no correlation between the value of a home and the homeowner's household income. Renters get hit even harder, especially if they don't qualify for Homestead Exemption. I don't accept the argument that a contribution to the increase is because the Federal pandemic relief funds have stopped.	Knowing fairly accurately what it will cost me as a homeowner in Fayston.

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Fayston	Community member	No	We need to get the State legislators to throw out all funding schemes all the way back and including Act 60..Allow the towns to raise and use their own funds again They need to use other funds, not regressive one such as property taxes, to raise the funds needed to help the districts that need the assistance. Stop robbing Peter to pay Paul. None of us can afford the tax burden placed on us now. Our schools need this budget to pass, I am not against that funding at all. Our schools here are in desperate need of repairs. Our staff needs to be paid accordingly, but we need to do this for our school districts not others. The state needs to find funding elsewhere, such as using the taxes raised or a higher percentage directed to school funding from cannabis sales, lottery sales, gambling sales... We can not put up with this anymore...I want to say yes to our school budget funding for OUR towns, responsible for our own spending only.	The state abolishing the robbing districts money Start living up to the obligation to help those schools needing the assistance without bankrupting the rest of us
Fayston	Parent of current student	No	It was a very hard decision. I did not know which way I was going to go. I want to support our schools, our teachers, our staff. I appreciate the hard work that our school members do in what is, to the say the least, an extremely thankless job. It came down to money. We are being taxed out of the valley. This is the fault of second home owners and short term rentals. Out of staters buying up properties are sending our home values and taxes through the roof. The state needs to step in and disincentivize out of state and multiple home ownership. My no vote was more a message to the state government. Raise taxes on non-homestead properties and give tax breaks to those of us living, working, and raising families in the state.	raising taxes on non-homestead properties. A revision of the way we are paying for schools.
Fayston	Community member	No	I would like it if i could vote by item.	
Fayston	Employee of the HUUSD	Yes	supporting our kids is important- punishing the kids for the fault of the legislators who have FAILED to find a solution to education funding is not right or fair	I will vote yes as I did before
Fayston	Parent of current student	No	State needs to understand that we cannot continue to fund this way	ldk
Fayston	Community member	No	Would like to see school closure, consolidation included.	Closing / consolidating under utilized schools and increasing class sizes need to be considered.
Fayston	Community member	Yes	I thought the 11% increase was too high given the property tax hike in stire, but wished to support the Board's work which I thought would be voted down.	Less than 5% increase and some relief from Montpelier prop tax blast
Fayston	Community member	No	To force everyone to demand that the legislators become responsible and address the shortcomings of this funding boondoggle.	To hear from the legislature that they have a viable plan to fund schools without such exorbitant tax increases - including a rollback on the current proposed increases. Cut salary and benefits. They comprise vast majority of budget and past raises and benefits have resulted in the opposite of compound interest. They get above average raises and are not asked to pay more into healthcare. It's been going on for years and like compound interest, the \$ value accelerates every year, it's just the opposite because it's a cost. Also, why is there extra money EVERY YEAR that goes into the maintenance black hole? If you're underbudget every year, your budget process is flawed. Do a zero balance budget and see where you come out.
Fayston	Community member			
Fayston	Parent of current student	No	This budget cycle appears to add potentially a 25%~40% increase to my property tax bill. Governments and their departments can't continuously increase the tax burden on the taxpayer. Honestly I'm shocked voter participation isn't higher.	Cost neutral to our community will get a yes vote from me. It's what my family has to do to live here.
Fayston	Community member	No	Too much spending on window dressing items not directly related to education.	Any surplus must address the maintenance of the existing building and equipment!
Fayston	Community member	Yes		
Fayston	School Bus Driver for HUUSD and Home Owner in Fayston	No	With property taxes expected to rise by a whopping 20% what do you think. Everybody has to contribute to austerity. I don't think the school system is aware that people in the community can afford such lavish expenditures. As a bus driver for HUUSD I am appalled to see how transportation costs are accumulating because of poor planning of use of transportation resources.	Severy austerity implemented in the school system. You cannot go ahead and spend OPM without concern of the impact it has on the community.
Fayston	community member and former teacher in the HUSDC	No	Just too much of a tax increase.	Close schools (Fayston) and let parents' choose where to send their children
Fayston	Parent of current student	Yes	My vote was a vote of support for the school. If it was a question on how great a job I think the state is doing to figure out the funding hole we are in- I would have voted "no". It bothers me to no end that we are trying to finagle thousands of dollars away from schools when we are willing to fund all sorts of unimportant things. We know the majority of flexibility schools have with budgets is around staffing. The first staff on the chopping blocks? The ones who are helping are most at risk students.	I voted yes and most likely will do so again. How can we even vote on these things when we don't know exactly how much our taxes are going up. I think all schools should have been asked to delay their vote.
Fayston	Parent of current student	Yes	The schools are severely underfunded. The proposed budget already excluded hiring any new staff. Now they are faced with laying off staff, and that will be hugely impactful to the kids and staff.	Understanding the tax implications. People threw around percentages like 1.7% increase and 30% increase. Those are vastly different, and I don't know what's true.
Fayston	Community member	Yes	To show support for our need to keep education a top priority, recognizing that failing to support our capital projects will cost us more in the long run, and because I can afford to offer such support. I realize, though, that many can't.	Some confidence that lawmakers are committed to fixing the education funding system at the state level.
Fayston	Employee of the HUUSD	Yes		I will vote favorably for the budget.

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Fayston	Community member	No	Costs are spiraling out of control. Voting yes just to support our students only gives validation to the system which I cannot do any longer.	Changes in funding calculations at the State level. i would need to see a more equitable distribution of responsibility between the legislature and the school district. Social services should be the responsibility of the legislature. We need to return to a standard of academic rigor that is now clearly lacking. We should continue to try to accommodate students with special needs, but the students on the higher end of the achievement scale should also be nourished. They are currently left on their own to fall through the cracks. Legislators MUST fix the formula; AND, their solution MUST be acceptable by the majority of taxpayers. Suggestion: Annual increase in sync with Cost of Living Index...AFTER the above. Start laying off in the administration offices--- NOT the teachers
Fayston	Community member	No	The Vermont legislature is responsible for this mess. In my view, our students are not being educated. Some of the expense of education can be put on the backs of property owners but by no means all. A large part of this budget involved social services. I have NOTHING against social services, but they are not education and should not be funded by property taxes.	Some specific uses of funds 让社区越来越好
Fayston	Community member	No	Unknown, but exorbitant property tax increase	Start laying off in the administration offices--- NOT the teachers
Moretown	Community member	No	Double Diget Tax Hike	
Moretown	Community member	Yes		
Moretown	Community member	Yes	可以更好的解决很多问题。	
Moretown	Community member	Yes	The more you budget, the better you can go.	
Moretown	Community member	Yes		
Moretown	Community member	Yes		
Moretown	Community member	Yes	Because I hope to have a better life	Let more people participate in the activities.
Moretown	Community member	Yes		
Moretown	Parent of current student	No	Posts did not revisit when had the opportunity to. They knew with the CLA coming up and taxes already going up, as well as the bond issue, they didn't think that people wouldn't be thrilled? I don't want to cut positions, but there are ways they could have trimmed the budget and at least give the voters the illusion that they cared about our concerns. As the Chair said "Let the people speak". And we did. Out of touch is an understatement.	Cut the budget so the tax rate is at least somewhat palatable.
Moretown	Parent of current student	Yes	Because we need to adapt to the current situation	Fairness, impartiality, openness, can ensure everyone's life and safety
Moretown	Community member	Yes	Support community activities	As long as it is beneficial to development
Moretown	Community member	Yes	Good for the school district	
Moretown	Employee of the HUUSD	Yes		
Moretown	Community member	Yes	More stable and reliable according to budget.	Using social media for promotion.
Moretown	Community member	Yes		
Moretown	Parent of current student	Yes		
Moretown	Community member	Yes	I feel that the fault for the crisis in funding education rests squarely at the state level, and voting down this budget would only have a negative impact on children and families in this district. I have a lot of trust in the new superintendent and current board, and believe that they did all that they could to minimize impact. I don't see where cuts can be made that won't be detrimental to students.	I already voted yes. I hope not to see any drastic cuts in staffing at schools.
Moretown	Parent of current student	No	There is a larger issue with property taxes in Vermont that needs to be addressed by the Legislature. The school budget accounts for a portion of our prop tax increase, and the CLA adjustments also impact it. Uncapped CLA adjustments are not sustainable and need to be addressed. A 30%+ increase in the CLA adjustment in the last three years is resulting in a large amount of money being collected by the state with no recourse from the voters on how those funds are used. I am unaware of any towns in VT that have seen an opposite 30% decrease in CLA since 2020.	Massive changes to the current VT Property tax structure by the legislature, including a cap on CLA adjustments.
Moretown	Parent of current student	No	If our Property taxes were increasing only 9%, the amount of YOY increase in the proposed HUUSD operating budget, the budget may have been approved. Add in the CLA impact over the last three years and the 9+% increase in local town rates, and we are in a situation where, as homeowners, our only recourse is to vote no on School budgets and vote no on Town budgets.	Not too deep cuts.
Moretown	Community member	Yes	This budget represented level funding of services for our students, even though costs have gone up.	
Moretown	Parent of current student	No	Adding things that arnt REALLY needed. A community kitchen?! With glass walls so people can see whatever's going on in the kitchen?!! Why is hardwoods kitchen not able to support a community kitchen? It's plenty big enough. Also, Why does everything need to be done all at once?	Don't ask for a wish list that's so huge all at once.
Moretown	Community member	Yes	The HUUSD school budget was reasonable given the needs of today's students and the cost of retaining good teachers. Schools are providing and paying for necessary services today that use to be funded by the general fund (income taxes). The state also use to contribute to construction aid. Now the schools have to pay 100%. It seems to me the state for years has pushed costs from the income tax to the property tax without making adjustments to the income sensitivity credit to keep pace with inflation. The state needs to fix the education funding mechanism. I had a choice of sending the state a message or supporting our schools. I Chose the latter.	Don't put up a budget with drastic cuts.

Harwood budget vote community survey (Responses).xlsx

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Hometown	Your role(s) as a voter		To send the legislature the message that they have to treat the school funding issue with urgency. We need to fund schools differently, and in my opinion move away from the property tax as full funding source for schools. we need to finally get a single payer health care (at least for primary care) to bring down the staff health care costs, and increase the "wealth" taxes,. We need money from other departments to also go into the education budget for all the things we ask schools to do that aren't "education" like mental health and social services. We need people to be able to afford to live here, so we can increase the # of students by retaining young families, and the drastic increase in taxes will have the opposite effect. I don't want to hurt the quality of education, but this level of taxes can sink our state.	I want to see what plans they board comes back with, and to be convinced that they have done the best they can, but just as importantly, I want to see the legislature put some funding relief in for this year, while they take aggressive action to fix the broken funding system.
Moretown	Community member	No	I did not vote. I was not comfortable voting one way or the other. We have to support our schools, and I have an expectation that if the state fixes the funding formula it would readjust our tax impact.	Confidence that we as a family will not be crushed by rising taxes.
Moretown	Parent of current student		I always vote yes on school budgets. I was an educator for over 30 years. I know the work that goes into creating school budgets by board members and administrators with teacher and student input. The budgets are the best they can be at that time.	I will vote YES, to support our schools. I expect the School Board to carefully consider everything and present a budget that we can afford.
Moretown	Community member	Yes	We need a more sustainable answer than raising property taxes. It is not affordable or feasible for locals to live here! The budget needs to be looked at more carefully- we need to cut the extra admin and costs. I believe it is not an issue of not enough \$, but an issue of the inefficiency in the system. The schools are garbage.	A simple explanation of what changed.
Moretown	Mother of a graduate	Yes	Not a dig at the board. Their job is very hard. Something HAS to give on the state level, and this is the only way force it. These tax rates will drive people away, or cause them to lose their homes.	Stated above. I can't even send my kids to public school bc they do not meet their needs, but im paying through the nose for taxes and private school!
Moretown	Parent of current student	No	I went back and forth about the budget for a long time. I love Moretown school, and have two children attending it. My husband and I watched the recording of the budget presentation, and a few things stood out to us, that ultimately made me decide to vote against it:	Hard to say. Double digit tax increases are a non-starter.
Moretown	Community member	No	1. There was not a clear answer to a question of why we were trying to keep the same level of service that we had had during COVID, when Federal money allowed the district to hire an additional 13 members of staff (I believe they said it was 13, but would have to go back and check their presentations again to confirm.) How can the school board expect the tax base to take on the extra financial burden of federal funding? Doesn't seem right...	
Moretown	Community member	No	2. When pressed on what would happen if the vote failed, and whose jobs might be at risk, there was not a clear answer. Did voting down the bill mean that we might loose something nice-to-have like free dental checks at school (example only; I'm guessing that comes out of a different budget), or did it mean that we would have to lay off second grade teachers?	
Moretown	Community member	No	3. Dr Mike didn't seem too excited about supporting the budget. He barely spoke in response to numerous valuable questions during that meeting. It almost felt like he himself was not behind the budget.	
Moretown	Community member	No	I understand that the drivers of increased budget -- transportation, health care, and salary costs -- are pretty much out of the hands of the School district, but it didn't feel like they were being entirely transparent with their budget. Not that this was intentional, it just seemed like they hadn't thought through alternative options, and were kind of waiting for this proposal to fail before going back to the drawing board.	
Moretown	Community member	No	My vote was also a protest vote against Act 127. I struggle with this, because I grew up in an area that benefitted from Act 60 in 1997, but I also know that it is almost impossible to find affordable rentals in Waterbury, and the last thing I want to do is price the town out for anyone other than wealthy residents and second home owners. While I may be able to pay an extra \$2,000 per year, this tax increase would cause the type income level segregation that I am trying to avoid. I'm hoping that, at the state level, this is a wake-up call to legislators who will seek to rework how Act 127 was written, and how schools can be funded on a state-wide level.	A clearer understanding of the impact that the school budget will have on my property taxes. The School Board was unable to share what the implication of this budget would be on what I will actually be paying next year. Or if they did, it remained unclear to me based on the way it was explained in that meeting.
Moretown	Parent of current student	No		

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Hometown	Your role(s) as a voter		The school repairs and maintenance and overall funding has been an issue for 25+ years. It seems only now in the past few years that the HUUSD wants to fix these issues when they should have been addressed as needed over the past bunch of years. It's now crunch time and they want to fix it all now. Just kicking the can down the road. I agree that many things need to be fixed or upgraded but trying to do it all at once and shove the cost down tax payers throats all at once is no way to do it. It's not attainable. How about spacing out the cost over a period of 10 years or so? Ease the burden when everything is going up like crazy. Too much more and people are going to start leaving the area or even the state and then the cost gets worse. Where is the money that was suppose to come from the cannibas tax and gambling tax (I know this just started)? This won't solve the problem but it will at least help a little.	
Moretown	Parent of current student	No	We cannot afford to keep kicking the can down the road as our community faces decline enrollment and rising costs. Staff have to be trimmed from our schools. The board, especially chair Ashley Woods, is leading the board down the wrong path by prioritizing cuts that do not include cutting staff. It's frustrating to hear, because unfortunately, the budget cuts needed require it. My spouse and I will not be voting for any budget until our tax increase is under 20%. Ashley also insinuated that many people voting no should realize they get an income-sensitivity break. We do not. We work full-time and have been frugal with our earnings, living below our means, doing a lot of our house and property work and maintenance ourselves, and not overspending. I suggest our school district does the same. Cuts can be made and our schools can still provide a viable and high-quality education. Teachers and staff are creative problem solvers. Necessity is the mother of ingenuity and innovation. I support public education and am willing to pay whatever taxes it takes to give kids a good education. But I didn't hear enough from the district about how they plan to lower their costs going forward, or an acknowledgment that this level of funding is simply untenable. I think administration is bloated and the number of support staff seems excessive. I am no longer sure that the district is making decisions based on what is best for kids and teachers. Their strategy and long-term plans are not clear.	the budget needs to come down and a plan in place as to how it will be spent over time and on what.
Moretown	Community member	No	to make a statement to the Governor, Legislature of Local School Board that 50 million dollars and continued increases and outrageous tax increases are intolerable. i feel the local school board just threw up its hands and accepted a bad law and funding system. They showed no responsibility or support of local tax payers.	The staff cuts required to bring down the budget 4-5 million dollars.
Waitsfield	Parent of current student	No	Enough is enough: the current state-wide education 'system' is irreparably broken.	I am willing to take this tax hike in the short term but I want to hear the school district acknowledge that this level of funding is untenable, and serious plans about how to bring costs down, in a way that prioritizes kids and teachers.
Waitsfield	Community member	No	Satisfied	Legislative repeal of a bad law that changed the funding strategy. Action by the Secretary of State to admit to errors and bad decision to adopt this funding formula. Action by the local School Board to pressure state government to act.
Waitsfield	Community member	No		Most likely a great deal more than will be presented. It can't be just a dollar reduction. Underlying structural (class size/admin size/ROI metrics/unfunded school mandates/etc) and legislative (tax/funding) changes have absolutely got to be made, otherwise nothing changes and the unsustainable 'system' continues.
Waitsfield	Community member	Yes		
Waitsfield	Community member	Yes		I can agree with any ticket that meets the requirements.
Waitsfield	Community member	Yes		
Waitsfield	Community member	No	Too much impact on our property taxes!	Justify poor performance in education and value per student. Show a plan to correct.
Waitsfield	Community member	No	The budget proposal was insanely insensitive to the real situation of average HUUSD residents. It was the last straw in a long line of destructive budgets. Going forward, all school budgets should be tied to inflation rate plus a MAXIMUM increase of 5%. With 30 budgets defeated, hopefully towns can unify to create a statewide standard based on this.	An increase that includes inflation plus maximum of 5% increase over previous year.
Waitsfield	Community member	Yes	Although it is a lot of money and I understand why taxpayers are struggling, education is important and expensive. There has to be a compromise.	Show an honest, well thought out effort to decrease some line items.
Waitsfield	Parent of current student	No	Our education funding system is fundamentally broken. This, coupled with soaring education expenses and home prices, created an increase in my taxes I can not support. The legislators seem to put blame on school boards/Administration and the school boards/admin put blame on the legislators. Voting no seemed like the only way to get both parties to seriously look at making the changes needed to bring our taxes under control.	The board/admin will have to take significant action to lower the budget. I also need to see meaningful movement from the legislature to fix this broken funding system. I'll voting for anyone but the incumbent legislators come November if nothing is done.
Waitsfield	Community member	No	No clear message from our legislators as to how Vermont is going to address this far too complicated funding formula and how our school board justifies and increased budget every year despite declining enrollment. Our district needs to get real about educating our children.	Cuts in spending including increasing student per teacher ratios. Restructuring, administrator cuts, too many leaders
Waitsfield	Community member	No	Too much money	Less cost, \$10 million less
Waitsfield	Parent of current student	No	The legislature needs a message that the have created this mess. I can't afford a 30-40% property tax, I have a kid in college.	Lower property tax
Waitsfield	Parent of current student	Yes	While expensive, I trust that this is the required funds to adequately educate the youth.	Going to vote yes regardless

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Waitsfield	Community member	No	I feel the school board needs to show fiscal responsibility. I don't see any efforts to reduce or control costs. We cannot continue to run and maintain as many schools as we do for as few students as we have. I attended the budget meeting and I did not get the sense that anyone on the school board was concerned about the increase in property taxes.	Plans that show long-term efforts to reduce spending. I want to see change that shows fiscal responsibility. I want to feel people understand that we can't afford to keep doing things the way we are doing them.
Waitsfield	Employee of the HUUSD	No	I voted against it. That was hard. As an employee but a taxpayer as well I can not handle the tax increase	Cut spending at the top. Had anyone looked at the heavy load at central office? There is such waste at the elementary schools with professional staff doing part time work- NOT class room teachers
Waitsfield	Harwood student	Yes		Alignment with Educational Goals: The budget should clearly support the school's educational objectives and improvement plans, ensuring that resources are allocated to areas that will enhance student learning and achievement.
Waitsfield	Worked at WES for years... in every classroom	No	We have too many schools in the valley, thus too many teachers, paras, etc. while the student population is decreasing. Way way too many "teachers" in the classrooms. The amount of IEP's and "experts" coming in offering services is astounding. Taxes are ridiculously high and this is a huge part of it. Don't schools receive money for all the IEP's that are written? For every special service that is given? While there are many wonderful teachers for sure, there are many that are an absolute waste of time. Any Harwood student will tell you this.	Consolidate elementary schools
Waitsfield	Community member	No		Not increasing property taxes to the point that residents will have to move and businesses will have to close
Waitsfield	Community member	No	I can't afford to live here anymore with double digit property tax increases.	No tax increase = or > 10%
Waitsfield	Community member	No	We cannot afford the continuing raise in taxes on a fixed income.	no more raise in taxes
Waitsfield	Parent of former students of HUUSD. Husband of HUUSD Employee/Home owner in Waitfield	No	The proposed tax increase was wildly excessive. The increase far out-stripped inflation, pay rate increase, cost of living increases, etc. We are in a never ending cycle of a bad education funding system in the state of Vermont. 33% of towns voting down their budgets is a loud voice to both the districts and state lawmakers. Additionally, our merged HUUSD has done nothing about consolidation to reduce costs. Too many buildings and too much redundancy. Image voting in favor of this knowing there is a huge bond vote lurking in our future. Our preference is to stay in the valley - an area that can hardly afford to loose more local workers.	Consolidation, reduction of redundancy, state adjustment to the education funding system and a single digit property tax hike (though would prefer no tax increase).
Waitsfield	Community member	Yes	I read the proposed budget, and it seemed reasonable. I work as the finance director of a regional nonprofit, and we're seeing similar budget increases, driven by the exact same factors: the new childcare tax, unsustainable increases to healthcare and other benefit costs, the need to keep wages competitive in an extremely tight labor market, and long overdue capital maintenance and improvement needs. To me, this is the objective reality of the world we live in, and I'm afraid that squeezing schools too much will create a downward spiral of education quality via staff attrition, deterioration of buildings, and cuts to essential services. I moved to Vermont from a state that went this route; it wasn't pretty. That said, I understand the objections. The tax increases are no joke. They're completely unsustainable for some families, so ultimately, I'd like to see us move away from property taxes as a method of funding education... Unless maybe we can just tax the properties of second home owners? (That's a snarky suggestion, I know... but not totally unserious...)	I will likely vote yes regardless, but I'd like to see some work to bring in other sources of revenue. Can the district apply for more grants or solicit more donations?
Waitsfield	Community member	No	Because the increase was outrageous. Although I can afford it, many in the community cannot, and many community members made this point clear. Further, I read that Vermont already spends a high amount per pupil, so I do not understand why there is such a problem. Finally, the last minute legislation changes left a situation where it wasn't even certain what the final budget would be. It would have been irresponsible to simply vote yes, and see what happens later.	A responsible plan that will support our students without send too much away from the district.
Waitsfield	Parent of current student	No	Seems a little excessive, and I still haven't seen any details of what this budget actually contains, and why it changed so drastically. The only thing I have seen was old people without school aged children complaining like lunatics on FPF.	A fair proposal, with details spelled out
Waitsfield	Community member	No	Cannot afford the tax as it is. Since payroll is about 70% of budget reduce payroll and use technology as much as you can/ no alternative and it might even be better. One teacher lectures in 9 different schools and works with a Teaching assistant. Reduce by 8 teachers and increase the pay of the outstanding teacher.	Reduce the price of education no increase EVERY organization is moving toward technology is some areas.
Waitsfield	Community member	No	if you need to ask...you are incapable of understanding	There is no way they will come up with something that is acceptable and it they do then they are all scumbags for trying to push this pile of shit through.
Waitsfield	Community member	No	too much money for the number of students	no more than last year + cola. consolidate schools

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			I believe in funding the school adequately. However, this budget resulted in increases that many homeowners (and others) simply cannot afford. As a community, we cannot "afford" to drive people out of their homes with such huge tax increases. Many live on fixed incomes or incomes that are barely adequate. Raising taxes to the extent proposed will destroy the lives of many in our community. The schools cannot provide all they are being asked to, such as social services and additions to staff and curriculums that were funded during the pandemic. There were apparently no plans to raise the funding to continue these services, yet they have been continued. Example: We now have a full-time nurse in every school and multiple nurses in some schools, where before the pandemic, this was not the case. Not saying that a nurse in every school is not a good idea, just pointing out one instance where increased services has remained in place without additional funding coming in to provide for it. Also, we have a school with a very small student population. It should be closed and those students distributed to the other 3 elementary schools. That would save administrative costs and costs related to staffing. If the school board looked closely, I expect there are other administrative costs that can be cut. Example: Stop renting space for the administrative team. Move them into the school building in Fayston when that school is closed - unless of course it is more lucrative to rent that building out. We have creative people in our towns - people who can figure these things out.	
Waitsfield	Community member and grandparent of a HUUSD school student, former HUUSD employee	No		The tax rate increase needs to come down to around 5% or less.
Waitsfield	Community member	No	Property tax rate increase is excessive	MUCH lower budget
Waitsfield	Community member	No	Govt needs to go back to work on school funding	
Waitsfield	Community member	No	Because it was the only tool available to voice dissent about runaway education costs and a broken statewide funding mechanism	Consolidation of facilities in the system, bring per pupil costs down to around the national average
Waitsfield	Community member	Yes	I was very torn right up until the last minute. I fully believe the funding system needs a complete overhaul, but I also trust our schoolboard and want to have high quality local public education.	
Waitsfield	Community member	No	To stimulate the state to transform education funding	I don't you yet
Waitsfield	Former parent and teacher and community member	Yes	To fix the building and consider better options for the school	You have it
Waitsfield	Community member	No	I am retired and make less than 20K per year. My tax bill is already too high. This continuing increase every year must stop. Make a few less missiles and TAX THE RICH	
Waitsfield	Parent of current student	Yes	There is nothing more important than education. Taxes were going up anyway. School board did their best and everything that can be cut has been cut.	Do NOT CUT any teacher positions. DO NOT CUT any advanced programming.
Waitsfield	Community member	No	The amount presented by the school board was ludicrous and risked ruining the entire Valley economy when combined with the necessary property tax increase, also the district did a very poor job of selling the budget to voters	A modest budget that keeps the system functioning as intended without the pork filling. The same applies to the future School Bond vote. Increasing the property taxes precariously would have a huge blowback effect on both property values and local businesses that are already under pressure from losing two months of ski season/year.
Waitsfield	Community member	No	The tax payers can not afford this amount	Reduce costs. Reduce administrative positions
Waitsfield	Employee of the HUUSD	Yes	I support the budget for our schools and as an employee and parent in the district I voted yes on the budget so that we do not need to make cuts to programming and staff. I understand how hard people work and the stress of the job and I would hate for that to be exacerbated with less staffing in our schools. In addition, I worry about the loss of programming and how that would impact our students.	I will vote yes on any budget. I am upset about the increase in tax rate and see this as a systemic problem that needs to be addressed and not one that our district should bear the brunt of.
Waitsfield	Community member	No	A budget like that which would increase our taxes and put many more people into poverty or just barely able to pay their taxes. This would create a negative spiral for our economy. For me as a small business owner, I would be forced to close. The increase in tax would create a significant increase in prices which would be unaffordable for many.	
Waitsfield	Community member	No	In addition, there is no reason to increase a budget if there was a surplus left from the previous year.	A reasonable budget that would not increase my property taxes to an astronomical rate that would be unaffordable
Waitsfield	Employee of the HUUSD	No	We need to consolidate. 5 elementary schools and 2 middle schools is ridiculous.	Talk about consolidation to less buildings.
Waitsfield	Community member	No	My vote was based on the absurd funding mechanisms and not about the spending.	Repeal Act 60 and the other acts intended to fix Act 60.

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Hometown	Your role(s) as a voter		<p>This increased amount is unacceptable to working class and middle class families in the district. This failed experiment of funding schools through property taxes levied on single family homes needs to be reconsidered.</p> <p>Do I feel that the school board or superintendent can do much to change this? No. Do I have any other recourse to air my grievances about the way schools are funded and who is funding the majority of school costs? No.</p> <p>Here we are. Watching our friends and neighbors flee the state in search of homes they can afford to buy and live in. Getting driven off of land that has been owned by their family for generations. Wages are stagnant. Rents and Mortgages are sky rocketing. Inflation is through the roof. There needs to be some substantive relief for working class and middle class families or else they will cease to exist.</p> <p>The situation is dire. We can only express our displeasure with a failed system by voting for reality television stars and voting down our local budget. Good luck. I don't envy you.</p>	
Waitsfield	Parent of current student	No	<p>As a long time resident, parent, and teacher in the district I am a strong advocate of public education. While I know that voting yes for the budget would impact my property taxes significantly, my belief in public education overrode the increased taxes. I appreciate the board trying to put forth a modest budget which allowed for growth for our children. The framing from the state that districts are overspending and that health care costs and salaries are to blame for the increased costs may or may not be true. What is true is that health care costs are not controlled by the districts. If the state truly wanted to control costs, they would work diligently to create a single payer system and find a better way to fund education than just property taxes.</p>	<p>You won't win my vote. My vote is a protest against a failed system. I have only voted against a school budget once before in my life.</p>
Warren	Community member	Yes	<p>Until there is a clear and definitive tax impact outlined I cannot support this. The state has done a disservice to the district by not addressing this prior to the vote. Perhaps it should've been postponed. The state needs to also reevaluate how the education fund is allocated. If my taxes will increase at the hypothetical rates of 20-40% I would expect that a majority, if not all, would go directly to our district and not others.</p>	<p>I will vote yes BUT our legislature needs to get the message (one third of budgets voted down) that they need to step up and tackle the hard issues of funding and health care.</p>
Warren	Parent of current student	No		<p>Know the actual impact on our taxes to make an informed decision.</p>
Warren	Harwood student	Yes		
Warren	Employee of the HUUSD	Yes		
Warren	Community member	Yes	<p>Review and adjust your budget regularly to make sure it reflects your current situation and goals.</p>	<p>The budget promotes diversity and inclusion in education, employment, and society, and provides resources and opportunities for marginalized groups and individuals.</p>
Warren	Schoolboard member	Yes	<p>Because it is our responsibility to educate the kids in our district. I know how tight the budget is, and the care taken to write it. I am disappointed with our legislatures lack of planning and research. Our local reps signed off on this and then offered very little in explanation at town meeting. It's BS.</p>	<p>I will vote yes in support of students</p>
Warren	Community member	No	<p>HUUSD is living in fantasy land. Enrollment declines yet they maintain the same physical infrastructure. The board trims around the edges when a fundamental change needs to happen. Schools need to be consolidated. There is too much infrastructure. And, picture of kids hiking doesn't make me want to pay for it. Hiking is great. Do it on Saturday at your own expense. It's what I do.</p>	<p>close fayston school. really, make and stick to a serious plan to consolidate infrastructure. As long as the district ignores the excess school infrastructure I will vote no.</p>
Warren	Parent of current student	Yes	<p>Supporting education of our kids is a high priority for me.</p>	<p>A budget focused on providing a high quality education for our district. Focus on student-facing teachers and staff, less on administrators.</p>
Warren	Community member	No	<p>Spending is out of control</p>	<p>90 % of this year's budget</p>
Warren	Community member	No	<p>To send a message the taxing system needs to be fixed.</p>	<p>An overhaul of the system</p>
Warren	Community member	No	<p>Like most folks, I voted no because of the impact on property taxes. I am a former teacher and am therefore totally in support of schools and education. I am making a statement that says Vermont needs to figure out build and fund an education program that works for students, teachers and financially for community members.</p>	<p>I am not sure they can fix this in one year. I think it going to be a very tough year for schools in this district. A YES will need a very small increase in my property taxes, in the neighborhood of 10% or less.</p>
Warren	Community member	No	<p>Too much reliance on property taxes as revenue</p>	<p>Complete removal of Act 60</p>
Warren	Community member	No	<p>The percentages for possible increases to the property tax were scary. No one seemed to know what the actual increases would be. It was all too "squishy" to make an informed choice. It also seemed incredibly rushed. I was stunned at the Legislature's timing. Surely they know how hard school districts work on their budgets. How could they throw such a huge monkey wrench into the mix at the last minute? It all added up to a "no" with hope for solid numbers in the future, and a much lower increase.</p>	<p>Solid numbers that are MUCH less than a 25% increase. (And, 25% was the low end of the scale.)</p>
Warren	Community member	No	<p>A 20%+ increase in my taxes is unaffordable. Act 60 is broken and needs to be addressed.</p>	<p>Something has to happen at the state level. I can tolerate sub 10% increase.</p>
Warren	Community member	No	<p>It would result in outrageously high property tax increase.</p>	<p>Tax increase should be kept reasonably low in line with past increases.</p>

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Hometown	Your role(s) as a voter	How did you vote on Article 1 asking to approve a 2024-25 budget of \$50,844,703?	Use this spot to comment on why you voted as you did on the budget question.	Another vote will need to be held to ultimately have a budget approved for the 2024-25 school year. What will it take to win your "yes" vote?
Warren	Community member	No	I feel that the budget is too high and measures need to be taken to reduce it. Teacher to student ratio is very high but testing reveals that our students are not performing well. Would be fine with a high budget if we were getting good results to justify the expenditures. Feel that we could reduce expenditures if we consolidated all the elementary schools in the Mad River Valley: Warren, Waitsfield, Fayston and Moretown. Fewer building expenses and fewer administrators.	Drastic reduction to the budget plus an overhaul on how the State pays for education.
Warren	Community member	No	Make cuts. Less students smaller budget. Teachers need to absorb health care insurance increases, not tax payers	Operate on less money. No increases.
Warren	Community member	Yes	My understanding was that the school budget would directly affect the real estate taxes in each community. I also understood that the taxes in Warren would be going up substantially more than the other communities. I, for one, can afford a tax increase coming from New Jersey where taxes are extremely high. However, there are a lot of homeowners in our town that a higher tax could affect their lifestyle.	A budget for the schools which might increase the real estate taxes by less than 10%. I also don't understand why Warren taxes would have a higher increase than the other communities seeing that Sugarbush Resort is in the town of Warren.
Warren	Community member	Yes		I'm voting yes
Warren	Community member	Yes		
Warren	Second home owner		Again I could not vote taxation without representation.	Acknowledgement that school consolidation means just that. We don't need multiple elem schools and associated admin. Spending \$1MM on a kitchen for waitsfield elem should be a wake up call.
Warren	Community member	No	The increase to property taxes would have pushed several people I know out of their homes and lives. It would have been tough, but worthwhile for our household. I believe the schools needs the money, but we need to fund it another way.	Funding another way. 1. Start charging non-residents a higher property tax than residents pay 2. Revise how the education budgets are calculated and define the usage based on geographic location. Like the state charges different counties for additional sales and use taxes. 3. Think about who lives in the MRV now and who will move in if things don't change, causing locals to sell due to exorbitant property taxes. People from out-of-state will buy, the tax base gets smaller, etc and we all lose!
Warren	Community member	No	I cannot afford any projected increase in property taxes - especially when the majority of the education taxes collected support the rest of Vermont and not the local schools.	
Warren	Community member	No	To send the State Government a message that the way we fund public schools is broken. I own a two thousand square foot home and my taxes will be over \$1000.00 per month.	Nothing, I am going to vote "no"
Warren	Community member	No	Much too expensive.	I felt it would help to improve the status of the buildings.
Warren	Community member	No	The state education funding system is a mess	Nothing wrong with the budget The education state needs to be reviewed
Warren	Community member	No	I voted no. The estimated tax increases are not sustainable. We would have to sell and move out of VT taking our income with us. How many Vermonters will not pay the increase because they cannot simply find the money? The size of the budget and increase demonstrates the school boards and State Legislature have failed to make decisions based on the financial reality of VT. Acts 60 and 127 have failed and must be repealed. Vermonters do not have unlimited funds, as the school boards and legislature seem to believe.	A budget that shows financial reality, shows buy in by the legislature, and repeal of acts 60 and 127.
Warren	Community member	No	The budget will result in a major increase in property taxes which is harmful to the community.	significant reductions in spending.
Warren	Community member	No	Projected property tax increases are scaring me. I am on a fixed income. I am hoping that the budget can be decreased by cutting out some things that are not absolutely needed to provide a safe, pleasing and welcoming environment for our kids to learn.	I need to see some cuts made that do not involve staff working with students. While I support athletics, now is not the time for additional gyms or track updates using the budget and tax dollars. Our community members have previously come together and volunteered to make improvements or raise money for improvements related to athletics. We need to go back to this method while property taxes and many other financial aspects of our lives have skyrocketed.
Warren	Community member	No	Too much all at once. Need priorities and long term plan for capital expenditures and maintenance. Need better transparency and accountability for expenditures. Need cost saving measures. Tax burden too high!!!!	Cutting costs as part of plan. Being more prudent with where to put money. Think long term. Should we close a school? Should we use alternative ways to fix something. Do we really need it? Don't expect tax payers to pay everything all at once. Think about affordability and must haves vs want to haves.

Harwood budget vote community survey (Responses).xlsx

Hometown	Your role(s) as a voter	How did you vote on Article 1 asking to approve a 2024-25 budget of \$50,844,703?	Use this spot to comment on why you voted as you did on the budget question.	Another vote will need to be held to ultimately have a budget approved for the 2024-25 school year. What will it take to win your "yes" vote?
			<p>The current funding formula does not recognise 'the ability to pay'. While many individuals moving to Vermont find VT affordable compared to the locations they came from, many people living and working here cannot afford the continuing property tax increases.</p> <p>I have voted against the budget continuing increases for many years and have become tired of the 'supporting reasons' as to why I should support it. I do believe in having an educated populus but am disappointed in the scare tactics that supporters revert to in their effort to support their position. It appears that when the need to reduce the budgets it is always put forth on how it will result in 'the reduction of programs', or the 'reduction in staff', which of course effects the quality of our students education. Honest efforts to reduce the budget must be undertaken, which must also include the ever expanding administration while our student population continues to decline. If consolidation is recognised as a viable means to reduce education costs and a community decides to keep their school, then they may do so but the costs should be pasted onto that community so they truly understand the costs of their preferences and not having other communities' property taxes increase when they are likely trying to control their costs.</p>	<p>A significant reduction in appropriate areas. Perhaps maintaining last years budget while the state reviews the funding formula and recognises the tax payers ability to pay.</p>
Warren	Community member	No	<p>The impact on property taxes and I am tired of the Legislature not acknowledging and fixing the mess called our Education Funding System.</p>	<p>The Legislature fixing the formula and taking the necessary steps to improve efficiencies in our education system instead of leaving it to local school boards. For example, we are paying for other District's expenses (i.e. Burlington Bond) but have no say in their budget - "taxation without representation."</p>
			<p>Many reasons, chief among them is how much is being spent per pupil yet VT ranks so low with the rest of the country on certain areas of education. I understand about all the mandates for special needs, etc, but we also need to see that our students are getting the education they need to be successful in life. I also feel the budget vote needed to wait until the legislature decides what they are doing with school & property tax. Pretty soon, we will price VT right out of the range of young families, we will have less students in schools so more per student spending dollars and many retirees will move if they have not already. I love my state but worry about its future.</p>	<p>Not sure, need to see what they come up with.</p>
Warren	Community member	No	<p>Voting YES was never an option. Voting NO was to send a message to the school board & the LEGISLATURE that changes needed to be made, dramatic changes. I have voted NO on all school budgets & bond votes since the state took away our local school board & forced a board merger with all 7 towns which seriously diluted Warren's voice in the budget process.</p>	<p>The school board is powerless to create a budget that makes fiscal sense. No matter how much is cut our taxes will remain to high because the funding formula is "mathematic voodoo" designed to penalize towns with a strong tax base. It is not really voodoo. It is socialism. Share the wealth.</p>
Warren	Parent of current student	No	<p>Because poor planning for years does not designate a \$50 million budget, for a failing educational program....</p>	<p>Nothing. Moving my kids to private school</p>
Warren	Community member	No	<p>It is not necessarily the school board's fault, but the increase to property taxes is unaffordable. The legislature needs to revise the plans. Being part of a "gold town" is ridiculous. Our property values may be high but not our per capita incomes (for many of us).</p>	<p>I'm not sure. All of the resultant tax increases are unaffordable. I support education but can not afford these increases. But from the part of Harwood, in a small valley without any real community facilities, it is hard to understand why 2 gyms are needed or why a second theater is required.</p>
Waterbury	Community member	No	<p>It was mainly due to the sharp property tax increase on the horizon. I financially see that as unsustainable and we has Vermonters needed to paint a picture that legislation needs to overhaul how education spending is paid for. I'd also like to see the school district have a more marginal increase in spending, like 5%. The 12% increase was just too much in my mind.</p>	<p>A smaller increase- and then how it reflects property taxes.</p>
			<p>The property tax increases for education over the past handful of years have been substantial. I know I can't keep bearing these seemingly structural increases every year indefinitely, and I'm sure my neighbors can't either. I don't think its healthy for our community to do so. I've never voted no on the school budget before. Quality schools are important for this community, but as things stand, we need to do more with less. Barring new information, I expect I will keep voting no until the budget is what it was last year, even though that means a still significant increase in taxes due to state funding formula changes. If we as a state must continue to bear increases in education expenses like this, it needs to come from somewhere other than property taxes.</p>	<p>Same budget as the 2023-2024 school year.</p>
Waterbury	Community member	No	<p>Big jump on the request for higher budget on top of 10% increase last year. The number of students is decreasing and it seems we are hiring more administrative positions than actual teachers educating. Do away with "dual " principles and there will be a significant cost savings. Also time to close either Fayston or Warren elementary schools.</p>	<p>see above, but a plan to phase out an elementary school in the district</p>
Waterbury	Community member	Yes	<p>I voted yes because I wanted to support our schools. BUT I want to note is was VERY difficult to support the budget because I didn't think enough care had been taken to be frugal. In particular, the \$1 million that was added for maintenance when the board thought there was a cap STILL STAYED IN even after they knew there would be no cap. That really felt disrespectful to taxpayers, and made me wonder what else was in the budget that was unnecessary but glossed over.</p>	<p>1. no brainer - take out the \$1 million extra for maintenance reserve that was added last minute</p> <p>2. I want to hear about the board asking difficult questions about various "buckets" within the budget and what it would look like to cut them in a meaningful way. If we don't end up cutting in the end, at least I would know that the attempt was made and the board and leadership was willing to have the difficult discussions.</p>

Harwood budget vote community survey (Responses).xlsx

Hometown	Your role(s) as a voter	How did you vote on Article 1 asking to approve a 2024-25 budget of \$50,844,703?	Use this spot to comment on why you voted as you did on the budget question.	Another vote will need to be held to ultimately have a budget approved for the 2024-25 school year. What will it take to win your "yes" vote?
Hometown	Your role(s) as a voter		<p>I'll start off by saying I fully support our students and our schools. I think the budget presented by the school board and the administration is fair and the correct one. I have been a Waterbury resident for over 20 years (a 6th generation Vermonter). Waterbury and the Valley have given me a sense of pride and belonging I didn't have growing up in southern Vermont.</p> <p>I support this school district. I do not support the way the state has decided to change the calculation of school funding and property tax. I would have certainly approved our school budget if my dollars went to the school (and then some). Voting no seems to only way to let Montpelier hear our frustrations. I find it unfair that our dollars do not stay local, rather combine in a pool for all the supervisory unions to pull from.</p> <p>Other community's planning (which we have no say in) results in higher taxes for us. Now the board will go back and decide which programs to cut directly affecting the quality of education to our students while other communities will get added programs. The domino affect will be when more of our students decide to go elsewhere further impacting our own cost per pupil and cutting more programs. The sense of pride and community will greatly be impacted.</p> <p>It was not clear to me early I the budget process what this new calculation would do to effect our tax bill. I was in full support and hopeful of the needed bond the board has been working with. Schools are the back bone of our communities and the bond would put needed money into the schools to further raise the level of education and pride in our students. Now, with this new calculation and budget tax most of us cant afford, how will we afford maintaining and improving our schools? I fear the community many love to come to will not be affordable just with the school budget change.</p> <p>This may not be the most organized or well written response, but to reiterate, my No Vote was not a No Vote to our local district: it was a No Vote to the State. There needs to be some changes in Montpelier.</p>	<p>The state needs to change their calculations and/or do a deeper dive into all community's spending and how it affects everyone. Coming back with a cut in program and labor to reduce our local school costs will not be acceptable. Our kids education should be rising, not lessening.</p>
Waterbury	Parent of current student	No	<p>Per pupil spending by state can be measured in different ways and of course, changes from year to year. Regardless of the calculation, VT spending per pupil is always in the top 5, often in the top 3 and in one case, tops the list. When you look at various measures of student achievement--math/reading at grade level, standardized scores etc, VT does reasonably well but not on par with its spending per pupil. In many cases, states that spend less do better or within a hair's breath of VT. Some of these states are more urbanized and some are more rural than VT. VT as a whole, not just Waterbury needs to figure out how to achieve without simply throwing more money at it. Other states have figured it out.</p>	<p>I am not entirely sure but it will require cuts that are going to be unpopular. I would start with interscholastic sports.</p>
Waterbury	Community member	No	<p>The School Board and Superintendent handled this poorly and arrogantly. They had an opportunity to retool the budget after H. 850 passed and chose not to, "letting the voters decide." That's not leadership, IMHO.</p>	<p>Leadership on hard issues facing our school communities and a desire to weight their decisions toward the students and not the taxpayers.</p>
Waterbury	Parent of current student	Yes	<p>I always vote yes. As an educator, I understand how much it costs to operate a school district. The funding structure needs to change, but until it does, we are responsible for funding the education of this generation of students.</p>	<p>Nothing. I will vote yes no matter what.</p>
Waterbury	Community member	No	<p>Property taxes are already too high. Too much added to school budget that is not needed.</p>	<p>Lower the budget and remove unneeded items</p>
Waterbury	Parent of current student	Yes		
Waterbury	Community member	No	<p>High rise of property tax</p>	<p>Much lower property tax increase even 5% is too much there needs to be some serious changes and consolidation that was supposed to happen years ago, too many added positions that don't affect students, two middle schools, student enrollment going down</p>
Waterbury	Employee of the HUUSD/teacher	Yes	<p>not sure as I felt it would fail</p>	<p>0% tax increase, unrealistic I imagine, but these increases need to be slowed down. Our State Legislature has let us down.</p>
Waterbury	Community member	No	<p>Taxpayers cannot afford the ridiculous property tax increases because of our State Legislators fiscal irresponsibility. Many of us knew this was coming.</p>	
Waterbury	Community member	No	<p>I'm tired of budget increases that are causing the cost of living in Vermont to be unaffordable. I don't get any input on some budgets (like health care) but this one I do get to have input on</p>	<p>A budget increase in line with inflation of 2-3%</p>

Harwood budget vote community survey (Responses).xlsx

Hometown	Your role(s) as a voter	How did you vote on Article 1 asking to approve a 2024-25 budget of \$50,844,703?	Use this spot to comment on why you voted as you did on the budget question.	Another vote will need to be held to ultimately have a budget approved for the 2024-25 school year. What will it take to win your "yes" vote?
			The situation defies all logic and common sense. Inflation currently 3.4%. Real wages over the past three years down more than 2%. Many in Vermont on fixed incomes. Proposed school budget 9% (or more) increase. Projected property tax increase unknown but apparently between 15% and 30%. No understandable explanation for why any of this makes sense. But even if it did, it is unaffordable and if this were a private company or a family, would never fly. We would (and do) simply have to make some very hard choices.	I am not sure that is possible. I am trying to remain open minded. I would like to understand in detail how the state is manipulating the distribution of education funds (what are the weighting factors, what is the purpose, etc.) I want to know why the state voted last year to require universal free meals for students (at a cost of, I believe, around 29 million dollars in this environment). I have heard from people who have worked in the schools who have witnessed that the kids don't like what they are served, and unbelievable amounts of untouched food goes directly from the lunch counter to the trash. Aside from that, why is the education taxpayer responsible to feed other people's children (even if we could afford it, which we can't).
Waterbury	Community member	No	In the future, it may be more necessary	Actual needs to be explained
Waterbury	Community member	No	I thought the board showed arrogance when given the opportunity to postpone vote and rework budget given the lifting of the 5% cap and chose not to.	Show a real commitment to make the hard decisions. This distinct is very heavy in administrative positions. Too many schools for the populations. Consolidations is needed.
Waterbury	Community member	No	I think that's right	I voted in favor
Waterbury	Harwood student	Yes	I think this decision will be good for the whole community.	I already voted for "yes".
Waterbury	Community member	Yes		
Waterbury	Parent of current student	Yes		
Waterbury	Community member	Yes	no	
Waterbury	Community member	Yes		
Waterbury	Parent of current student/College faculty	Yes		
Waterbury	Community member	Yes		
Waterbury	Parent of current student	Yes	I hope there will be more transformation.	Good for me or my children.
Waterbury	Harwood student	Yes	Want to see unexpected gains	For me, it's just for good.
			\$50 million today so in 3 years we are told Harwood (and I am sure many others) need to be rebuilt due to PCB. Time to consolidate Waitsfield, Fayston and Moretown to help with the bottom line. I have respect for the administration, teachers and paraprofessionals however the bulk of the budget are salaries and insurance are just a few of the issues.	Focusing on the bottom line and the future. The taxpayers can not afford it.
Waterbury	Community member	No		
Waterbury	Community member	No		
Waterbury	Community member	Yes		
Waterbury	Parent of current student	Yes		
Waterbury	Parent of current student	Yes	Because it will succeed.	Need enough votes
				Adequacy of funding: Voters may look for a budget that provides sufficient funding to meet the needs of students, including resources for teachers, classroom materials, and extracurricular activities.
Waterbury	Community member	Yes	Support community activities.	Describe the benefits and benefits.
Waterbury	Community member	Yes		
Waterbury	Community member	Yes		
Waterbury	Community member	Yes		
Waterbury	Community member	Yes		
Waterbury	Community member/Employee of the HUUSD	Yes		
			I am shocked, dismayed, and disheartened to see that the school board would submit a budget with a 10% raise for staff when they are the highest paid teachers in the state. Are community members getting 10% raises in their jobs? The average salary for a teacher in the state is \$45,000-68,000 and the average salary at Harwood is \$68,000+!!!! Is Harwood the best school in the state? It should be! Yet when I was coaching there only 3 years ago I knew multiple students whose parents sent them to schools outside of Harwood for academic reasons (not good ones!) There is no long-term sustainable solution to the problem of increasing costs when teachers are getting \$100K+ including benefits to work about 8 months out of the year.	An honest attempt by the school board to put forward a budget that is fair to voters. I'd start with an increase of less than 5%
Waterbury	Community member	No	The schools need to find new ways to fund themselves. I think that some consolidation would be helpful. I understand that these are difficult problems however we cannot continue to place the burden on our property owners. Doing so will cause people to abandon the state in favor of more affordable places to live. I know several people of means who have already moved out taking their tax dollars and considerable local spending with them. Many others I talk with are also exploring relocation options due to the expense of living in Vermont.	Major changes in how the schools operate
			My property tax is to high. Your thinking a bond vote to build a new gym ,track and field, etc. We don't know if the school will pass pcb test. Think people. We need to fund our schools differently.	Cut the fat. Lean and mean.
Waterbury	Community member	No	Can't afford more wasted taxes	25% budget cut
			Significant cuts need to be made to the inflated district administration first. The work can be done with 1/2 the employees. Property taxes are out of control. A new revenue stream needs to be established for funding education so the responsibility for funding can be spread out and decrease the pressure on property owners	Significant cuts to district administration
Waterbury	Parent of current student	No		

Harwood budget vote community survey (Responses).xlsx

		How did you vote on Article 1 asking to approve a 2024-25 budget of \$50,844,703?	Use this spot to comment on why you voted as you did on the budget question.	Another vote will need to be held to ultimately have a budget approved for the 2024-25 school year. What will it take to win your "yes" vote?
Hometown	Your role(s) as a voter Can I pick 3? Parent of several children, community member, and part-time employee/4 kids, MS Soccer Coach			
Waterbury		No	Its inexplicable why we need 21 more staff than just 2 years ago, especially with a reduced enrollment. Property tax implications for the proposed budget. I would like to see additional review of alternative options, including consolidation of some of the MRV schools to reduce administrative duplication and building maintenance. Even if that option required upfront investment to expand/renovate existing buildings, it seems there would be a long-term cost savings that could justify it. Each of the Valley elementary schools serve 25% to 40% of the students that are at Brookside. From Moretown Mountain Road to Waitsfield Elementary is 15 minutes, the same as my child's commute from Waterbury Center to CBMS. I'd imagine a high percentage of kids attending Fayston Elementary drive past Waitsfield on their way to school. Having 4 schools in the MRV that serve nearly the same population as Waterbury/Duxbury does not seem sustainable any longer.	At most, a level service budget as compared to 2022 - Meaning no more than 365 FTE. This is roughly \$48.8 million budget. My preference would be a reduction from 2022 staffing to reflect the reduced enrollment to 355 FTE.
Waterbury	Parent of current student	No	Can't afford taxes now, wife and I both work and anymore increases we will have to sell our home and move to a different state.	Additional review of alternative scenarios, and justifications as to why they are not feasible. I understand there are certain factors that the board doesn't control such as health care costs and union wages, but those aren't going away. We need to rethink how the HUUSD is organized. I want my kids to have the best education possible, but not every voter in these towns have kids and just see dollar signs. And many of those that do have kids are going to get priced out of their homes in the next 5 years if we see 30% education property tax increases year after year.
Waterbury	Community member	No	Property tax increases are not needed and cause a real stress for those living on fixed incomes. Those that do not have children in the school system should not be bearing this burden and those second home owners are not contributing.	No property tax increase, we, my wife and I cannot afford it.
Waterbury	Community member	No	We need to get some control over the astronomical increases in property taxes since Irene. I favor shifting to income tax which is a better measure of ability to pay than property value.	Much lower budget than what was proposed. Use the resources you have already. If buses are not being filled, reduce the amount of buses being used. Find ways to cut expenses
Waterbury	Community member	No	Affordability	I know our school board will try t bring the budget down. But the real problem is we are relying on property as a proxy for wealth which is not accurate. We also have made our schools the source of social services which they are not designed to be. We need a tax system and a wage system that allows ordinary people to make a living so they don't need extensive social services.
Waterbury	Community member	No	People just cannot afford the huge increase in taxes. We are retired.	3 percent increase
Waterbury	Community member	No	I am a single (widow) person getting getting close to retirement age. The cost of living has skyrocketed in the last 2 years and pinching my budget. I just cannot afford higher taxes. Especially in the range that was reported!! There need to be REAL reform around property taxes. What was being asked of the tax payers was beyond the means of hard working people.	Lower it.
Waterbury	Community member	No	Unfortunately I think admin and non students facing roles are one of the first places that should be cut. I support teachers but not admins. After listening to the bond discussion and seeing how much of disrepair the high school is in. You don't get 80+ million in need of repairs in a few years. Its seems there has been years of neglect. I think higher budget is throwing good money after bad. There was no mention in any of the outreach meetings I saw about accountability to ensure we aren't having leaky roofs and dangerous outdated HVACs in the future.	No extras in the budget. If the budget isnt reduced, I will vote no once again. Our legislators need to make property tax reform a top priority. I have been paying attention how they vote, so I can vote accordingly.
Waterbury	Parent of current student	No	Property taxes are already out of control - this only makes matters worse. Vermont: fewer students, more teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals, lower test scores, more kids "diagnosed" with more problems than ever...where are the parents in owning some of the underlying problems - not everything can or should be solved by the school at ever-increasing cost.	We are all hurting and the next few years families will really have to make some tough choices so must the district. I'd like to see discussion of cut admin positions. Creative rotations for district staff, like the superintendent and non student facing staff to be rotational teaching staff rather than stand alone costly positions. Collaboration on cost sharing with other districts for supplies, curriculum etc. Capping non student facing salaries to no more that 20% above the highest paid student facing role.
Waterbury	Community member	No	I recognize that HUHS needs major upgrades and am all for it. However, I'd like to see a revisiting of ideas such as consolidation of middle schools, closing a school or two in the Valley, moving the District office to HUHS, etc. These are hard choices, but they need to be made. This is the first time I've voted down a school budget. We can't keep pouring money into partially filled schools and green-lighting massive budgets just because it's easier than the alternatives.	flat budget on a per pupil basis
Waterbury	Community member	No	Not voting yes to ANY budget that significantly increases my taxes	I want to see choices and thoughtfulness. No double digit tax increase. Guarantee they try to pass a budget that will still increase our taxes 14-16%.
Waterbury	Community member	No	The school board is not doing enough to decrease costs. Limiting increases is no longer sufficient. Decreases are needed to translate into property taxes that are sustainable. Regardless of what some towns may want, additional consolidation is needed within the district. Some, perhaps many, administrative positions that are NOT student-facing need to be eliminated. The cost per student of over \$42,000 is simply ridiculous. We moved here roughly 5 years ago from an area where the cost per student was approximately \$14,000, and test scores were better (although we understand a lot of items impact test scores). We've just grown tired of accommodating a system and a district that continues down a path that results in unsustainable property taxes.	A decrease in overall spending. I will no longer support ANY budget that results in ANY increase in the property taxes we pay.

Harwood budget vote community survey (Responses).xlsx

Hometown	Your role(s) as a voter	How did you vote on Article 1 asking to approve a 2024-25 budget of \$50,844,703?	Use this spot to comment on why you voted as you did on the budget question.	Another vote will need to be held to ultimately have a budget approved for the 2024-25 school year. What will it take to win your "yes" vote?
			Our district is so over extended. We needed to consolidate the district years ago. This was a huge mistake that was made by the school board due to a very vocal small group of people. It is a horribly hard decision to make and unfortunately no one has the courage to do it. We will continue to hemorrhage out of all of our schools until we decide that we can make these decisions and consolidate this district.	Consolidation Consolidation!!!
Waterbury	Parent of current student	No		
Waterbury	Parent of current student	No		
Waterbury	Parent of current student	Yes	I am never going to vote no on a school budget. I am a teacher in the district, and kids deserve to be educated. However, for the first time ever, I felt conflicted about a budget. I really think Harwood needs to do some restructuring. Fayston really does need to close, and our class sizes are probably too small. If we start talking about cuts, I think we need to look closer at the number of administrative positions first before teachers. I think that cutting programming should be avoided at all costs.	I am always going to vote yes.
Waterbury	Community member	No	I am attempting to retire and am going to lose my home because property taxes are beyond my ability to keep up with. Yes perhaps lack of planning on my part but I did a lot of the work on my lovely house and with everything I created/ constructed I get taxed more. I cannot keep up!	A total rethinking of the way we finance education. I think somebody more adept in finances should be able to figure out a better and more sustainable method. Does it really make sense to anybody with fixed incomes to be able to deal with a rise in property taxes year after year? Where is the \$\$ expected to come from? Answer- It doesn't!
Waterbury	Community member	No	I understand education is expensive but so is everything else. That is just more than most people can absorb into an already tight family budget.	Really look at the budget (like a family does) and make hard decisions. There must be things in that budget that are wants, not needs. Some items need to be reduced, consolidated or cut. There is no way to make everyone happy but there must be a way to not push people out of the area or out of the state because the property/school tax is just too high.
Waterbury	Parent of current student	Yes	Because I believe the pandemic has left the schools with large and long term problems (behavior, learning loss, emotional trauma, neglect) and they are already struggling to meet those needs. Cutting staff, services, or programs is a terrible idea right now.	
Waterbury	Parent of current student	Yes	I ultimately voted to approve the budget as both of my children are students in the HUUSD district. The possible significant property tax increase was painful to think about, but ultimately I landed on wanting to support the teachers and schools in our district, and ultimately, even with a new budget proposal, the significant costs seemed like things out of the control of the school board, and our taxes are still likely to go up a lot. I believe there needs to be a state wide solution to this problem, as it does not seem like the current funding system is sustainable any longer. This problem only feels enhanced by the looming maintenance that needs to be done to Harwood that seems to be perpetually put off. Our district does not seem unique here- Stowe was facing similar issues, as I imagine other districts in the state. Again, I think an overhaul to the funding of both school budgets and maintenance will be needed on the state level, and soon!	I already voted yes, so I will likely vote yes again, however it would be nice if that yes didn't come with a 20-30% tax increase.
Waterbury	Community member	No		As much as I hate to say it, we need to cut the budget to decrease the impact to our community taxes. It's a terrible situation to be in.
Waterbury	Community member	No	Property taxes are already too high. In addition, we do not see a return on our "investment" in results. VT is only middle of the pack in performance nationwide. It is time to close schools, cut spending, and find a way to live within their means just as almost every household has to do. The state legislature must revisit the most recent legislation they passed.	Good question. For one, the state legislature will have to revisit the latest legislation. Secondly, the state will have to devise a plan to start consolidation of schools. Thirdly, there would have to be a significant decrease in the percent of property tax increase.
Waterbury	Community member	No	The no vote will cause the school board to look more closely at the budget to fine tune some aspects of it. In addition, it is hard for me to support a budget that keeps a 74 student school (Fayston) and a small middle school in operation given the trends of lower student enrollments and costs of operating small schools.	See my answer above to why I voted no.
Waterbury	Community member	No	We are retired and living on a fixed income, we already struggle to pay our property taxes that have tripled in the 15 years we have lived here. Something needs to be done to keep the school budget from increasing our taxes by double digits. It isn't sustainable.	I would like to see a budget that increases our taxes less than 5%.
Waterbury	Community member	Yes		
Waterbury	Community member	Yes	Because I believe in well-funded public education as a critical component of our community and the future of our town, state, world, etc. I think that people voted "no" because of fears of Act 127 and what it means for property taxes. However, I think those fears are unwarranted and the state has done a VERY poor job of explaining what is actually happening with that policy and what it will mean for individual tax payers and their schools. There has been a lot of negative press around this act and it feels like everyone has been equating approval of a school budget with approving increased property taxes?	I will continue to vote yes.

Harwood budget vote community survey (Responses).xlsx

Hometown	Your role(s) as a voter	How did you vote on Article 1 asking to approve a 2024-25 budget of \$50,844,703?	Use this spot to comment on why you voted as you did on the budget question.	Another vote will need to be held to ultimately have a budget approved for the 2024-25 school year. What will it take to win your "yes" vote?
Waterbury	Grandparent of a student attending a HUUSD School/Community Member	No	The Board is not even discussing any changes that would create long-term structural savings, such as school consolidation. However, they are considering a \$70 million bond issue that would add another \$3 million more per year to the budget for the next 30 years. Wages are up by 9%, not willing to cut programs or services. I am middle class, retired 5th generation Vermonter and I cannot afford to live here anymore. I don't see my grandson getting any better (in fact worse) of an education than my 2 children who attended HUUSD schools.	Simply reduce the budget. Make it happen. Not rocket science
Waterbury	Community member			I intend to Vote yes to support the schools, but there is a great deal of confusion among many community members about the impacts of Act 173 and Act 127 - Vermont has an extremely complicated education funding system. We just need this info shared out to us in an uncomplicated way if that's possible. I also note that increases in special education services and transportation for students with disabilities are indicated as levers for budget increase - I would like to know more about if this is from needs within district programming or the need for tuition to out of district placements because HUUSD is unable to meet needs. Do our special education services lead to positive outcomes for students with disabilities? How do we know? I think the voters need further analysis with rationales - it's dangerous to pinpoint special education as a primary driver without an explanation of root cause behind increase. I know there are challenges with meeting federal and state requirements - but can we be assured that the financial investment into our most vulnerable students is about quality and not the result of needing extra staff because educators are not getting the training they need to educate those with often complex disabilities? How much is this also the result of pandemic regression? Are the resource needs increasing due to mental health, which may or may not be a special education issue? I honestly don't know and I am very interested in this. But I will support our schools and vote Yes.
Waterbury	Parent of current student	Yes	I figured it would fail but wanted to vote for it.	We need real cost savings. We need to close a school like fayston. It costs a lot and there are great options close by. Having two middle schools, in the same town, is also just crazy. I think the state needs to take major action as well and fix the funding. I personally think one state school district would make the most sense. If not state wide then maybe 4 districts in the state, not the crazy thing we have going on now.
Waterbury	Community member	No	We are on a fixed income. Tax increase was not doable.	Smaller budget.
Waterbury	Community member	No	I felt it was the only way to send a message to the state that the system is broken. I also think the maintenance funds should be removed. I appreciate the goal and agree that everyone statewide should have access to an equal education. But expecting folks to absorb a 30+% property tax increase in a single year is going to be a great hardship for some and impossible for others. I really do fear this will be the last straw for some in our community that will be forced to leave due to the cost of living. I appreciate all the hard work the school board did to do the best they could with the bad hand they were dealt, especially at the 11th hour with the increase cap changes. The combination of CLA issues, health care cost increases, and the huge swing in pupil weights are out of the school board's hands, they are in a tough spot.	Remove the \$1million maintenance reserve that was added, and pray that the state or federal government steps in to do something about the deferred maintenance/capital costs looming across nearly all school districts. I don't know how we resolve the eventual bond needed for Harwood HS upgrades either...I don't have kids in the school system, but I also don't want to see the board remove positions (if we can help it) and impact their learning in that regard. Even in the biggest cut (scenario 5) with many positions eliminated, I am still likely looking at a minimum \$1000 property tax increase. So frankly we are hosed either way you slice it, and taking out the maintenance fund seems the most reasonable option to ease some of the pain without reduction in services for the kids.
Waterbury	Community member	No	Spending and resulting tax rate is too high. Budget was not "re-booted" after legislature passed new laws affecting tax rate cap. Whether the effect would have been positive or negative on our tax rates, school board and administration should have taken action to formulate a budget to better match the new law.	An admission that school spending and not a dropping CLA is responsible for the rising costs to the tax payers-- across the state. The taxes necessary to run the school is the difference between spending (the budget) and other non-tax revenues. While there are several variables that go into the equation, in the end, the amount of taxes to be raised divided by the equalized grand list result in a tax rate for each town. The CLA adjustment insures that all taxpayers in the district are billed education taxes based on 100% of the fair market value of their property. If the CLA is higher in one town than the other, the ed tax rate in that town will be lower than the rate in a town with a lower CLA. Properties in both towns that have the same fair market value will end up being billed a very similar, if not exact amount. Spending needs to be cut to moderate the tax rate. The rate of spending increases over time must come down, too. Cutting spending is difficult when so much of the budget is comprised of elements over which the board has little control. The number of employees working in the district and the number of school buildings being operated may be the only variables on which the board can make changes.
Waterbury	Community member	No	Maintenance at Harwood, has always been minimal. Seems like they would rather the school fall apart, rather than maintain it!!	Would have to learn more!

Harwood budget vote community survey (Responses).xlsx

		How did you vote on Article 1 asking to approve a 2024-25 budget of \$50,844,703?	Use this spot to comment on why you voted as you did on the budget question.	Another vote will need to be held to ultimately have a budget approved for the 2024-25 school year. What will it take to win your "yes" vote?
Hometown	Your role(s) as a voter		Education is of utmost importance for the future of our town, state, country, and planet	I will vote yes, but I would like to see a lesser tax burden
Waterbury	Community member	Yes	Because I can't afford my taxes to go up as much as they would with this budget. Please consider closing the Fayston school to help offset costs.	Choosing to close the Fayston School at a minimum. Revising it cutting out all of the extraneous costs get it down to Bare Bones and build it up again without all the fluff.
Waterbury	Parent of current student	No	I cannot afford my property taxes to increase that much	The state needs to provide a different funding formula; we should not punish our students because we can't figure out a better formula
Waterbury	Parent of current student	No	The predicted tax increase was just too much for us; this was the first time in my life that I have voted against a school budget. (Full disclosure: I was on the Barre Town School Board for 13 years and have always been 4+++ supportive of education and school funding)	Impossible
Waterbury	Community member	No	It too is crazy	a much lower increase in our taxes
Waterbury	Community member	No	Our taxes are way too high. The increase needed to support the school was way too much. Something needs to be done to lower taxes. Increases of 20 and 30% are not sustainable	Even if the school board makes huge cuts our property taxes will still be going up astronomically. The only way for the state legislature to understand that property taxpayers won't take any more is to keep voting down budgets.
Waterbury	Community member	No	I understand that the school board is facing increased expenses over which it has no control. However, between rapid rises in our education tax and our town tax rates our property taxes have been accelerating ever since Irene, and in the latest school budget are accelerating at multiple above the rate of inflation. Vermont needs to end its reliance on property taxes to fund school and municipal budgets. For most people the major part of their wealth is in their property. So taxing property each year is a tax on "wealth", except the very wealthy, who have vast sources of wealth beyond the property they own pay a small percent of their income in property taxes, while those of us in the middle class pay an increasingly large share of our income in property taxes.	A lower budget more in line with the avg cost of living as I'm on a fixed income and own my home and land.
Waterbury	Community member	No	BUDGET not in line with the C.O.L. RATE, seems a little excessive.	
Waterbury	Community member	No	I voted yes because my family can afford the property tax increase and have students in the system	
Waterbury	Parent of current student	Yes	\$50,844,703 REALLY? With a ridiculously low student teacher ratio? Not everyone lives in a Macmansion. Are we educating Einstein's?	A 5% increase or less
Waterbury	Community member	No	Our communities cannot afford a huge increase in our property taxes.	A significant decrease in the budget. Instead of cutting support staff and teachers, start at the top and cut some duplicate positions. Growing up we had a single principal not multiple.
Waterbury	Community member	Yes	I voted yes because I want to see our schools thrive, and they need a passed budget to do so!	I will continue voting yes until it passes :-)
Waterbury	Community member	No	Too much money for this budget. Why not work with the money they have instead of asking for more	
Waterbury	Community member	No	I agree with Scott Mackey's assessment. We have not addressed the strategic direction of the school district. We need to act on that. In the business world in which I work, there is no such thing as level service budgeting. We have to justify, innovate, process improve, etc every year to deliver. The school district should be doing the same. The district cannot claim to have zero control over the costs. Wages agreements were made by someone. Health insurance decisions were made by someone. In the private world, health insurance costs have been shifted to employees. All of this just shifts the burden to tax payers without justification. 12% yoy increase of people expenses with declining enrollment is outrageous.	A budget grounded in the same realities as I have to operate.
Waterbury	Community member	No	The impact on property taxes was too high and the school board showed no interest in trying to save money through consolidation of resources. It is unacceptable to ask the community to bear the increased cost without making any attempt to save money. I have voted for every school budget, but could not vote for this one.	Significant budgetary cuts through consolidation. I will not vote for any budget that cuts programs. We can save money through closing buildings.
Waterbury	Community member	No	Impact to my tax bill	Outcome of negotiations on reducing the tax impact
Waterbury	Community member	No	I can't afford to live in this town as it is. Too many out of state money here pushing locals out with high taxes, high home prices, highland prices. When and where does nit end? when all natives are gone?	Level funding
Waterbury	Community member	No	Way too expensive. The school board needs to consider significant personnel cuts to minimize the impact to taxpayers. School class size is too small and many positions are not needed. Do we need all of the assistant teacher positions?	Significantly cut the budget. The school board did not want to consider the option that cuts 23 positions. The board needs to take a hard look at costs. The taxpayers cannot afford Vermont's high cost education and the benefits paid to staff which is not common in the marketplace. We are seeing an out migration of residents especially retirees who cannot afford our high property taxes. This has to change if we want to keep Vermont affordable.
Waterbury	Community member	Yes	I will support educational expenses no matter the cost.	When the budget is revised, educational programs should remain fully funded. Other programs, such as extracurriculars and sports, should be considered for the first reductions. Additionally, negotiated staff and faculty bargaining agreements must be honored in the budget.

Harwood budget vote community survey (Responses).xlsx

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Waterbury	Community member	No	<p>First time in 48 years I have voted 'no' on a school budget. I did not feel knowledgeable about the budget itself - confusion over the state's actions and how HUHS budget related to the state's education budget postponement (H850) and original Act 127.</p> <p>We went through a difficult merger for the purpose of cutting costs, I have yet to see that materialize. While I understand there were increased costs, I feel like the system just does the same thing and re-jigger numbers. It's really time that teachers, the board and community re-think how we educate our children in a cost effective way. For example, I can understand one or two AP classes, but when students take many, it seems to me those should be taken in college. Why are we paying for kids to take college classes? Of possible, given them a diploma and let them go to college. Or, why not require internships that do not require intensive classroom and teacher time but give valuable experience. That would eliminate a need for buildings and teachers for one year. I would think the same in the vocational fields.</p> <p>Why not use the excess chill capacity for town admin or convert some to housing?</p>	<p>Clarity of relationship of HUHS budget to the state Act 127. How will the overwhelming increase in our budget serve our students? Clarity re: is this increase setting a new standard (vs. a one-time increase?).</p>
Waterbury	Community member	No	<p>Whatever you choose, using the same paradigm is not going to solve our problems.</p>	<p>Not sure, sorry.</p>
Waterbury	Parent of current student	No	unaffordable tax increase	<p>revisit consolidation. fayston elementary is 7min from waitsfield elementary. can we avoid cutting services and educational experience through this process?</p>
Waterbury	Community member	No	To large of an expenditure increase, 11+% overlays year	<p>3% or less expenditure increase over last year</p>
Waterbury	Community member	No	<p>While I applaud the board, the "untouchable" nature of a 9.8% increase in salaries negotiated with the union is unsustainable. Year after year increases have become the norm which is NOT typical for the majority of population. Even the rationale that Insurance costs are going up, falls flat as those costs are also absorbed by taxpayers. Even the Childcare income tax seems to be being absorbed in the budget so it shelters staff. That is unacceptable. Indeed, I still go back to you authorized the expenditure of \$1M for an elementary school kitchen on what amounted to a sole source contract. It should have been competed. Finally, the overhead costs of HUUSD (back office, not forward, student facing) is a serious concern. The growth in these positions over time has been significant and seems to not even being considered for curtailment. I also do not trust this discussion of reducing by 13 FTEs from the previous year. Rolling in Federal Money was the problem to begin with. You FUND valid requirements. Those positions are NOT cuts as the requirement shouldn't be seen as a normal budget position.</p>	<p>I have been watching the discussion and I believe one board member is being responsible when looking at the administrative positions that arguably are NOT student facing and frankly did not exist in the past. Being drunk on Federal money is no excuse of failing to make hard decisions. Keeping FTEs that are not deemed critical is not just a one time cost (or savings), it is a lifecycle cost for years to come. Right size the Union now, stop acting as if these discussion never took place in the past.</p>
Waterbury	Community member	No	<p>Rediculous amount of money for what we get. Harwood is very disappointing these days</p>	<p>Better test scores and accountability- lots less money. Don't threaten essential classes. Stop getting rid of shop class. Almost can't afford to live here as it is with taxes. No bang for your buck right now.</p>
Waterbury	Parent of current student	No	<p>The school board and the District Employees have lost sight of what people actually want and what we can afford. If this budget was presented to a business it would have been laughed out of the board room and somebody would have been fired for incompetence. It's time to make cuts not keep asking for more money.</p>	<p>Serious cuts in district staff. Mainly administrators</p>
Waterbury	Community member, parent of HUUSD, and employee	Yes	<p>Honestly, even though I have a lot personally invested in the school, this was still a hard decision (which it shouldn't be!). The tax increase was too high. That said, when we weigh the risk to our kids and their school, I felt that the risk was too high. A budget cut will be devastating... so I voted yes.</p>	<p>I will vote yes. Period. That said, based on your proposed budgets, my hope is that you will continue to hone in on #2 and #3. This is a hard time of year for educators and I also feel that having a strong direction for next year (ie getting a budget proposed sooner than later) will help keep more teachers from looking at other employment opportunities. I do worry that community members will vote no unless the change is bigger. I'm not sure how much we can lower taxes to make those 'no' votes turn around.</p>
Waterbury	Community member	No	<p>Worries about the increase in taxes</p>	<p>Reasonable budget</p>
Waterbury	Community member	Yes	<p>I was very hesitant as the increase was very significant, however I have a child who will attend BPS in a few years and wanted to ensure that the services/curriculum that is offered today will be in place (or expanded) in the future. I totally understand why this did not pass though- the ask is very steep.</p>	<p>Better explanation of "what would the Harwood community lose?" (employees, classes, curriculum, etc)</p>
Waterbury	Community member	No	<p>I fully support good education and fully supported the previous hardwood bond. Vote which unfortunately failed. I believe tough decisions need to be made regarding location of schools, and actively pursue merging smaller schools and create one middle school. The high school must have major repairs done but the per student costs can't result in 30% tax increases.</p>	<p>See above</p>
Waterbury	Community member	No	<p>The district needs to consolidate the elementary schools so that we are not paying to maintain as many buildings and save that money there. Plus hardwood Union needs to be updated maintenance wise and that should take place and if there needs to be a bond vote for improvements that should be done.</p>	
Waterbury	Community member	Yes		<p>Less of an impact on local and state property tax increases</p>

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			<p>I can't support a budget until the school board presents a plan for school building and administrative consolidation. Why do we have two middle schools for a district this size? Why are there 9 principals for 8 buildings? What is the tax impact on each town in the district by keeping those low-attendance schools (Warren, Fayston) open? (i.e. what is a Waterbury resident paying to keep Warren elementary open)? See this article for a fairly clear breakdown on how keeping Roxbury school open impacts the tax bill for residents in Montpelier and Roxbury. https://montpelierbridge.org/2024/03/mrps-budget-defeated-school-board-must-make-cuts/</p> <p>Discussions about other changes to the budget (staff reductions, extra curriculars, etc.) seem to be avoiding the elephant in the room. Closing a school should not be done lightly but it needs to be an option. The board seems to be avoiding that discussion.</p> <p>For those concerned about the negative impacts on a community when a school closes, I'd encourage a look at the Bridgewater VT school. Bridgewater was closed as part of a consolidation effort in that district and has since re-purposed the building into an incredibly successful day care center. https://bridgewatercommunitycenter.org/aboutus</p>	
Waterbury	Community member	No		Similar to above, until the board outlines a plan for building and administrative consolidation, I'm voting no.